

Resources

American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) of Massachusetts

617-482-3170

Anti-Defamation League/Massachusetts

617-457-8800

Fenway Community Health Center — Violence Recovery Program

617-927-6250

Governor's Task Force on Hate Crimes

617-727-6300

La Alianza Hispana

617-427-7175

Massachusetts Attorney General's Office Civil Rights Division

617-727-2200

Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination

617-727-3990

Massachusetts Office on Disability

1-800-322-2020

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) — Boston Office

617-265-7900

For TTY/TDD users, call
Massachusetts Relay Service
(24 hours a day)

TTY/TDD: (800) 439-2370
VOICE: (800) 439-0183

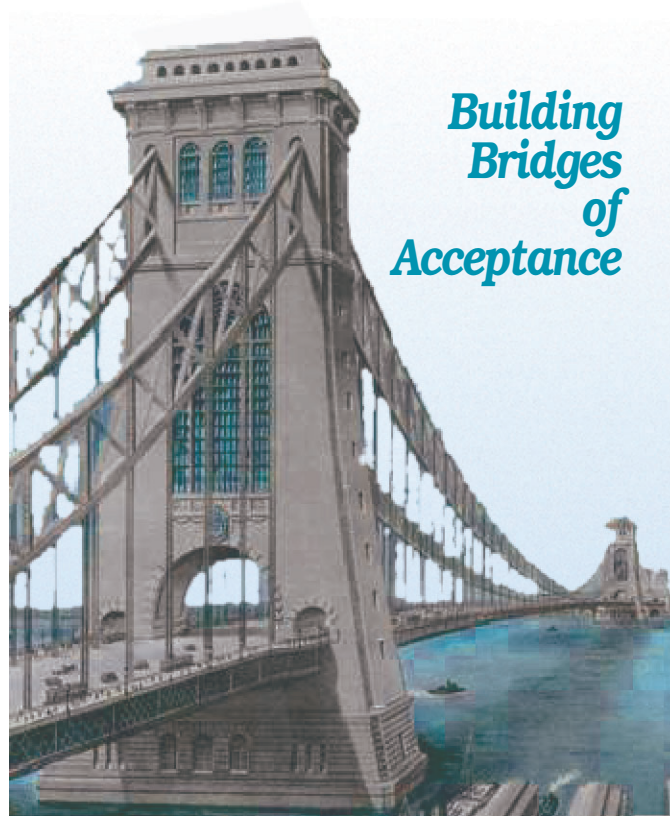


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Civil Rights and Hate Crimes



CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND HATE CRIMES HAVE AN UNIQUE IMPACT ON THE TARGETED VICTIMS AS WELL AS THE COMMUNITY.

- ❖ Hate crimes and civil rights violations are considered “message” crimes — crimes that send a message of fear and terror based on bigotry, prejudice and hatred of all kinds.
- ❖ Hate crime targets often feel degraded, traumatized and terrified.
- ❖ Families of hate crime targets often feel frustrated and powerless.
- ❖ Others in the community who share the target’s characteristics often feel victimized and vulnerable.
- ❖ Hate crimes and hate incidents create community wide unrest, and can prompt reprisals and escalating violence.

WE ALL HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE SAFE!

- ❖ Federal and state constitutional protections are guaranteed to all persons. Yet, some individuals are targeted and victimized, sometimes subtly and at other times very overtly, for no reason other than the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, their national heritage, their gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- ❖ Victims of civil rights violations and hate crimes are targeted because of a core characteristic of their identity. These attributes cannot be changed.
- ❖ Targets of civil rights violations and hate crimes are not seeking special legal rights, but simply the right to live their daily lives without fear of attack or harassment. For example, we all have the right to leave or enter our homes safely and to use public streets or accommodations without being intimidated or assaulted. These are not special rights, but rights we all share in our American society.

Hate crimes hurt everyone

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS — KNOW THE LAWS

A number of federal and state laws prohibit acts or threats of violence, as well as harassment and discrimination, based on race, color, religion, ethnic/national origin, sexual orientation, gender or disability.

Massachusetts Hate Crimes

Under Massachusetts law, a hate crime is any crime motivated by hatred against a person or group on the basis of:

- race
- color
- religion
- sexual orientation
- disability
- ethnic/national origin

Hate or bias crime encompasses not only violence against individuals or groups, but also crimes against property, such as arson or vandalism, particularly those directed against community centers or houses of worship. Hostile or hateful speech, or other disrespectful or discriminatory behavior may or may not be a crime.

Hate crimes can occur in any of the following ways:

- ❖ A physical attack (assault and battery, as well as other violent crimes such as murder, manslaughter and rape); or
- ❖ Intimidating or threatening be-

havior putting a person in fear of immediate physical harm (assault, threats to commit certain crimes); or

- ❖ Damage to property (arson, vandalism).

Other Massachusetts Criminal Laws

Other Massachusetts laws may also apply. There are several Massachusetts criminal laws that prohibit defacing a school or place of worship; tagging (painting, marking, scratching, etching or otherwise defacing or destroying) public or private property; or destruction of a place of worship.

Massachusetts Civil Rights Law

Under this law, your civil rights may be violated if any person willfully interferes or attempts to interfere with your constitutionally protected legal rights by threats, intimidation or coercion.

CIVIL RIGHTS VIOLATIONS AND HATE CRIMES ARE SERIOUS CRIMES!

How You Can Help

Report it

We all have important roles to play in responding to civil rights violations and hate crimes. These crimes cannot be investigated or prosecuted unless they

are reported to law enforcement agencies.

Get involved

- ❖ Support efforts in your community to promote diversity and tolerance.
- ❖ Help establish positive civil rights and hate crime prevention and response strategies in your neighborhood, school or community.
- ❖ Contact the Norfolk District Attorney's Education and Intervention Services Unit at 781-830-4800. Working with a host of resource agencies and service providers, we provide community education programs, activities and other resources.

HAVE YOUR RIGHTS BEEN VIOLATED? HELP IS AVAILABLE.

Criminal Proceedings

If you have been threatened, physically attacked or discriminated against because of your race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin, gender, disability or sexual orientation, you may:

- ❖ **Call your local police department at 9-1-1.** Every police department in Norfolk County has a specially assigned Civil Rights Officer. These officers are there

to investigate reports of possible criminal violations of Massachusetts civil rights laws and hate crimes.

- ❖ **Call the Norfolk County District Attorney's Office, Civil Rights Unit at 781-830-4800.** The Civil Rights Unit of the Norfolk District Attorney's Office includes prosecutors, victim-witness advocates and community outreach staff.

We work closely with our local police departments when investigating and prosecuting criminal complaints regarding civil rights and hate crimes.

Civil Proceedings

The Massachusetts Civil Rights Act permits the Office of the Massachusetts Attorney General to obtain a court order (injunction) ordering an individual to refrain from certain conduct or activities. Violation of an injunction is a criminal offense. For more information on your right to file a civil complaint seeking an injunction, contact: Massachusetts Office of the Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, One Ashburton Place, Boston, MA 02108, (617) 727-2200.